



Bassingbourn Scrapbook 1897 to 1990

Facts, Features and (occasional) Fallacies
reported in Cambridge Newspapers

summarised by

Mike Petty

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Most of these stories originally appeared in the Cambridge Daily/Evening/News or the
Cambridgeshire Weekly News, its sister title.

They are supplemented by some articles published in the
Cambridge Independent Press or Cambridge Chronicle

Most were featured in my 'Looking Back' column in the Cambridge News from 1996-2014

The complete 'Cambridgeshire Scrapbook' of which this is a small section is published online at
[bit.ly/CambsCollection](https://archive.org/search.php?query=creator%3A%22Mike%20Petty%22)

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I have digital and other copies of most of the stories summarised.
I hope to publish these online one day. If you would like them in the meantime then please get in
touch.

The original volumes are housed in the Cambridgeshire Collection at Cambridge Central Library
where there are many other indexes dating back to 1770.

They also have detailed newspaper cuttings files on over 750 topics that have been compiled since the
1960s.

Newspapers sometimes get things wrong. I copy things out incorrectly. Do check

There are a multitude of spelling and layout errors. Please forgive or correct them

News never stops but this file was finished on 31 August 2016.

I will maintain supplements and corrections – contact me for anything you need

Please make what use of these notes that you may. Kindly remember where they came from

See my website – www.mikepetty.org.uk for further notes.

Mike Petty, Stretham

2018

Bassingbourn Scrapbook

1897 08 26

Bassingbourn pub & Teetotal Society, p3 *

1897 08 26

At the Brewster sessions at Royston application was made for a spirit licence for the Railway Tavern in the parish of South Bassingbourn. It had been licenced as a beer house for a good many years. A large number of new houses had been erected in that part of the town and a large number of persons coming to play golf, cricket and football had to pass the house and constantly asked for spirits. It was on the direct road to the railway station. The pastor of the Kneesworth-Street Congregational Chapel ventured to oppose the application.

1898 11 16

At Cambridge bankruptcy court Wilfred Waldock, miller, of Ashwell said he had started business at Bassingbourn mill about 1885. In 1896 the mill was burnt down and he obtained £400 from the Insurance Society. He afterwards took Ashwell mill. The terms of agreement for the tenancy of the mill was that he was to share the water with the brewer. He knew he could not pay his creditors. Insolvency Cambridge roads, p2

1899 07 24

An action was brought by Thomas Barlow, baker of Litlington to recover £9 from a Bassingbourn butcher in respect of a breach of warranty in a horse dealing transaction. Defendant had told him the mare was quiet to ride and drive, but that on putting her in the trap she was a little bit "swishy". He drove the mare to Royston, and on starting from Joe Coote's shop it began to kick. On the way home it had two other turns of kicking. On the following morning he took two hours in attempting to get the mare into the cart, then gave it up for a bad job

1900

1901 08 20

Bassingbourn stack fire, p2

1904 09 02

Cambridge has had more than its fair share of tragedies. Foremost is the terrible tragedy enacted at Shrapnel Barracks, Woolwich, when a Cambridge girl was destroyed by her soldier lover who subsequently shot himself. Then there was the inquest into the wife of a Chesterton hairdresser who committed suicide, a pitiful tale of conjugal unhappiness, poverty and religious mania. Equally shocking was the terrible death of a Bassingbourn girl in a London shop fire. Emerging safely from the burning building she rushed back into the flames in a foolish attempt to rescue her engagement ring.

1905 03 07

Janet Mundy, the Bassingbourn district nurse appeared in court charged with riding a bicycle on the footpath. PC Frost said she told him 'What am I to do. I can't get about with the roads in such a state'. Next day he saw her again and he had received numerous complaints about her. The Rev Clarkson said she was a district nurse and had to ride a great deal. Sometimes the roads offered a choice of riding over unbroken stones or deep ruts so she simply took to the path. If she were acting in a private capacity it would be different. She was fined 2s.6d and the Chairman said that if the offence were repeated the full penalty would be inflicted. 05 03 07

1906 06 30

Fourteen public houses have been closed under the Licensing Act of 1904. They include a beer house at Heath Road Litlington, which sold one barrel a week, including stout, and a gallon of ginger wine. All their beer was made from pure malt and hops and it was a better house than the two nearest to it. There were four fully-licensed houses, four beer houses and one off-licence in the village. The Dolphin at Stapleford had been shut up for six weeks as the former landlord had run away and the village appeared to do well without it. The present tenant was a cycle agent and taxidermist as well, 'So you stuff people first and put them on wheels afterwards?' also Cambridge: Jolly Butchers, Star, Sun; Bassingbourn: Crown; Bottisham: Plough; Comberton: Plough; Fordham: Six Bells, Landbeach: Red Cow; Lt Shelford: Carrier's Cart; Stapleford: Dolphin; Steeple Morden: beer house; Waterbeach: Haunch of Mutton, Plough and Horses; Willingham: William IV, Rose and Crown
06 06 30d,e, f

1906 11 02

At an inquest on an old lady who died of ptomaine poisoning at Bassingbourn it was suggested death was caused by some jam which had been used as a pudding. Fortunately the grocer still had some left in the pot from which he had served the family and submitted it to the county analyst who was unable to find any traces of any poisonous substance. Whatever caused the death, it was not the jam. 06 11 02a

1907 06 29

The Milkmaid was one of 13 licenced houses in Willingham and they could do away with half of them, magistrates were told. But there were 100 acres of market gardens all round where a great many men and girls were constantly employed and some came to the house for lunch. The trade had increased since the King William was closed and now did over a barrel a week
Also: Marquis of Granby, Woodman's Arms, Claremont, Golden Fleece; Swaffham Prior Anchor, Harston Green Man, Lt Shelford Three Horseshoes, Over Duke of Cumberland, Willingham Milkmaid - details, Isleham Bell, Fen Ditton Pike & Eel. Bassingbourn Tally Ho, 07 06 29 & a

1908 07 31

Twenty-six licensed houses are to close, magistrates decided. They include the Robin Hood at Litlington, Chesterton Long Reach, Swaffham Prior's Uncle Tom's Cabin and the Three Jolly Watermen in Waterbeach Fen. But the Fox in the Wood at Soham and the Cock at Isleham were spared after Police Superintendent Winter failed to appear to give evidence. The licence of the Black Horse at Over was renewed after the Star Brewery appealed. also Barrington Boot & Shoe, Bassingbourn Yew Tree, Steeple Morden Lion, Swaffham Prior John Bull, Bottisham Rose & Crown, Cottenham Six Bells, Oakington Lion and Lamb, Stapleford Hammer & Anvil, Swavesey Chequers, Willingham Little Rose, Castle Camps George, Balsham Ram, Linton White Hart, Cambridge Yorkshire Grey, Old Red Lion, Nine Pines, Thatched House, Baker's Arms, Red Lion, Brewery Tap & Carpenters' Arms. CWN 08 07 31

1910

1910 07 01

Licences for: Bassingbourn Beerhouse in the fen, Meldreth Green Man, Fulbourn Coach & Horses, Chesterton White Horse, Cottenham Boot, Fen Drayton Horse & Gate, Longstanton Red Cow, Milton Three Tuns, Shelford King William IV, Shudy Camps Chequers, Linton George & Dragon. Cambridge Star & Garter Petty Cury, Cardinal's Cap, Crown & Anchor, Borough Boys, Ship, Merry Boys, Prince Albert, Oxford – all refused. Melbourn White Lion & Swavesey Little Rose renewed 10 07 01 & a

1911 03 03

A Bassingbourn grocer's assistant told the court he'd left the premise with the horse and van containing groceries. The horse was in very good condition, although a bit stiff when it started. The van was an ordinary grocer's van and he had been driving horses 13 years. He denied any cruelty to the animal. But P.C. Frost noticed the horse was lame on the off-side leg and an RSPCA Inspector

said it was unfit for work. The grocer said the animal had since been disposed of and he'd gone to London to buy a replacement. The charge of cruel ill-treatment was dismissed. 11 03 03j

1912 02 16

The former tenant of the Hoops at Kneesworth complained that when magistrates took away his licence they had taken away his living. They had said there were too many public houses in the village. But since then the building had been demolished and a handsome village clubroom built on the site where members could obtain intoxicating drinks. The Bench said they could not remedy the matter and if he wanted to get beer he should become a member of the club. He had since become licensee of the Rose at Bassingbourn. 12 02 16

1912 09 06

Bassingbourn tragedy – inquest – 12 09 06d

1914 11 13

Belgian refugees – Carlton, Waterbeach, Bassingbourn, Sawston, Willingham, Horningsea, Elsworth, Fowlmere, Ickleton, Cheveley

1918 10 30

Bassingbourn stacks, overrun by rats - court case p5

1920

1928 05 08

Bassingbourn fire, p8

1930

1930 02 17

Mr Chris Waller of Bassingbourn, one of the most famous trainers and riders 'over the sticks' of his day, has died as the result of a collision between his four-wheeled American buggy and a motor car. He successfully trained and owned many horses in the course of a long association with the Turf. He steered Jolly Sir John in Old Joe's Grand National of 1886 and Aladdin in 1888. As a trainer he commenced at Welwyn and migrated to Royston whence he went to Stockbridge to manage Major Joicey's stud farm. 30 02 17a

1931 01 02

A six-wheeled Chevrolet lorry was destroyed in a fire that broke out in a garage adjoining Bleak House, Bassingbourn. Mr G. Lincoln was lying under the lorry emptying the petrol into cans when some splashed on to the lamp by which he was working. It ignited and the lorry was enveloped in flames. Despite his burns he went into the garage adjoining and brought out another lorry. Royston fire brigade obtained water from a well and the fire was checked; the house was not touched. 31 01 02f

1931 08 21

A.J. Willmott of Royston has retired after serving 42 years with the Post Office. He used to travel for many years between Bassingbourn and Guilden Morden, driving a horse and cart, but lost his heart to a Royston lady and had been there ever since. He did his duties in a praiseworthy manner and always carried a smiling face. But he had not enjoyed good health and was moving to Westcliff into a house electrically fitted; he was presented with an electric kettle and a reading lamp by his colleagues. 31 08 21a

1931 12 18

A haulage contractor from Bleak House, Bassingbourn told the bankruptcy court that in October 1928 his father gave him a lorry and he carted live stock. Later he purchased other lorries on the hire

purchase system but some could not stand up to the work and cost a considerable amount for repairs. They were overloaded to a certain extent, but not more than other lorries which stood the work better. He could not say they were not driven over 20, 30 or even 40 miles an hour: he did not drive them. 31 12 18c

1934 02 09

A man met a terrible death while he was oiling a moving overhead shaft in Mr Worboy's saw mill at Bassingbourn. His left side was crushed, his ribs broken and both legs were completely amputated at the knee. He had been working his machine since before the war and knew that no bearings were to be oiled whilst it was in motion. 34 02 09

1935 02 28

Cambridgeshire oldest inhabitant, Mrs Martha Starr (nee Rayner) of Bassingbourn was born at Christmas 1832. There were 15 in the family and after her mother died she kept the home going. Martha married Charles Starr of Shingay when she was 20 on an income of seven shillings a week (35p) and had eleven children, five of whom are still living. Although bedridden she had all her faculties and enjoyed all her meals up to three weeks ago. Her end came quietly, aged 103. 35 02 28b

1936 01 11

Fire at Brook House, Bassingbourn – 36 01 11

1936 03 24

Ellis Wilkerson of Manor Farm, Barley founded the business of Messrs Samuel Wilkerson & Son, corn merchants, at Bassingbourn 73 years ago, moving to Royston in 1876. He farmed 800 acres, taking a great interest in his sheep, and was a director of the Royston Farmers' Manure Company. He was also a fine judge of barley being a buyer for Mess Bass, Ratcliffe and Gretton of Burton-on-Trent. 36 03 24

1936 07 23

The deeds of Bassingbourn Recreation Ground were handed over to the Parish Council as a perpetual playing field for the village. The generous gift was made by Samuel Willmott of Muswell Hill who was born in the village when there was no tennis courts, the cricket wickets were two sticks with a coat thrown over them and at Christmas they played hockey using a large brewers' bung for a ball. He also erected handsome entrance gates at the South End road entrance carrying the words "Willmott's Playing Field" in large letters 36 07 23a

1936 11 05

The Air Ministry propose to construct a RAF station at Bassingbourn and approached South Cambs RDC about the possibility of obtaining a supply of 15,000 gallons of water a day. This could be obtained from Croydon Hill at a cost of 10d per 1,000 gallons. The scheme would take 20 months to implement and would also serve nearby parishes. But did any of the parishes want piped water? It would mean a rate of over four shillings for Litlington, Shingay and Wendy and there had been too much money spent on water already, all of which was money wasted. 36 11 05c & d

1937 09 07

Bassingbourn stack fire – 37 09 07a

1937 10 13

County Council proposals for the establishment of village colleges at Swavesey and Impington have been approved by the Government. But they reject plans for a new junior school at Cottenham: it would be better to use the money from Insurance to rebuild portions of the burnt down one. Negotiation would be opened with Cottenham Eleemosynary Charities for the purchase of land in Lamb's Lane. The County would also discuss with the Air Ministry about school-age children due to arrive in Bassingbourn in connection with the establishment of an aerodrome 37 10 13c

1938 08 05a

Some 900 aircraft are taking part in an exercise testing the air defence of Great Britain. The attacking force will have 36 bomber squadrons (some from Bassingbourn and Wyton) while the defenders will consist of 23 fighter squadrons and 14 bomber squadrons, including planes from Duxford, Debden, Feltwell, Mildenhall and Stradishall. Anti-aircraft and searchlight batteries will be spread across the Eastern Counties. Bombers will fly without navigation lights unless other aircraft approach and fighters are forbidden from attacking below 1,000 ft 38 08 05a plane crashes at Melbourn – 38 08 08. Mayor made tour of town, all in darkness apart from one or two lighted windows – 38 08 08b

1938 08 11

Water scheme including Bassingbourn aerodrome – 38 08 11 & a

1939 04 19

The inquest on a 19-year-old aircraftman who shot himself while on sentry duty at Bassingbourn airfield failed to find any evidence as to what had led him to commit suicide. He had been issued with a rifle and five rounds of blank ammunition. Police found the empty case of a live cartridge in the magazine. There was no blank ammunition anywhere. Later the missing rounds were found in another airman's coat pocket. It seemed he had taken the wrong coat by mistake. 39 04 19a

1939 12 01

Councillors objected to Roman Catholic evacuees being moved from Linton to Clacton at public expense. They were in very comfortable homes, were well looked after and educated. "I do not care if they are Catholics or Hindus but they should not be moved at public expense", one said. Now they were being removed simply because the Roman Catholics wanted them to be under their supervision. They had previously agreed to take another 80 children; 40 were due to arrive at both Sawston and Whittlesford, but none came. At Bassingbourn only six out of 27 had arrived. Rooms had been gone ready and people ought not to be put about like that. They had begged and worried people into taking them and they didn't turn up. 39 12 01f & g

1940

1940 09 20

Foolish war-time names. All praise, say I (writes Watchman) to the Rev. J. A. F. Ozanne, of Bassingbourn, who is making a welcome stand against giving children foolish war-time names. Many children, says Mr. Ozanne, according to the "Daily Mail", are being christened 'Siren', because they were born in an air raid. "One might just as well name a child 'Foghorn' or 'Basin'", he says, 'because it was born on the high seas. I have always refused to baptise any child with out-of-the-way names.'

1942 01 09

Presentation to Retiring Head Teacher - Mr. H. Appleyard, late head teacher of Bassingbourn Council School, has been obliged to retire from his post owing to continued ill health. At the close of the Christmas term a testimonial was presented to him in recognition of his services during the past seven years. Several friends spoke of Mr. Appleyard's good services to the school and of his social work in the village. An album artistically inscribed by Miss Waddelow, with the names of upwards of 250 subscribers was presented to Mr. Appleyard, together with a cheque for £50 as a token of sympathy and good wishes for Mr. and Mrs. Appleyard. Of this sum £4 9s. 1d. was raised by the schoolchildren 42 01 09

1942 03 06

Ordination—At the Church of St. Gabriel, Bounds Green. Edmonton, Mr. Edward C. W. Rusted was last Sunday ordained deacon by Bishop H. Crotty. Mr. Rusted was presented by the Rev. F. C. Synge, (chaplain to the Bishop of London), who also preached the sermon. He is the second son of Canon and Mrs. E. Rusted rector of Carbonear and the grandson of Mrs. and the late Mr. George Rusted, of Cherry Tree Cottages, Bassingbourn. Mr. Rusted has on several occasions assisted at the parish

church. It may be of interest to mention that his grandmother, Mrs. G. Rusted, celebrated her 91st birthday last Sunday. 42 03 06

1942 05 01

Death of Major-General. The death occurred suddenly at Melbourn on Tuesday of Maj.-Gen. Sir Layton John Blenkinsop, K.C.B., B.S.O. who had a distinguished career with the Royal Army Veterinary Corps and was Director-General of the Army Veterinary Service. He was 79 years old. He was a great supporter of the British Legion, from the branch county and area points of view. He was the first President of the Melbourn branch, and later became President of the Bassingbourn and District branch. 42 05 01

1946 02 25

Landing planes in fog; radar wonders at RAF Bassingbourn – 'Fido' demonstration – 46 02 25

1947 03 20

Bassingbourn RAF closing hostels, p6

1947 04 18

A conference to discuss water problems and their solutions heard recommendations as to the water supply to the parishes of Longstowe, Babraham, Duxford etc. Merits of a scheme for a supply of water to those parishes without a piped supply were discussed. The main point at issue was whether the existing source at Croydon should be maintained and developed. One hundred and twenty thousand gallons of water per day were wasted during the recent severe weather. Owing to the snow and floods it was difficult to account for the losses. Eventually however they were found to be due to burst pipes at Bassingbourn airfield, p9

1947 08 12

One of this morning's news items was: "The Secretary of State for War flew to Germany today. He travelled in an R.A.F. Transport Command aircraft". When you read that and similar items concerning famous men journeying in Service aircraft you can be pretty sure that the crew and their plane have come from Bassingbourn R.A.F. Station. There is the "home" of 24 (Commonwealth) Squadron whose job is carrying V.I.P.s. The aircraft used are Yorks, Lancastrians and Dakotas. The Squadron's planes all have one thing in common - the shining, burnished brightness of their exterior. Metal polish and elbow grease are the means of obtaining this effect; mechanical polishers cannot be used as they are liable to damage the metal. The planes are masterpieces of smartness

1948 02 02

The plight of R.A.F. personnel at Bassingbourn, often left waiting in queues at the railway station whilst waiting for transport to be available to take them back to camp after a weekend leave, was mentioned at a sitting of the Eastern Area Traffic Commissioners. Permission was sought for a bus service direct to the camp from London. Whippet Coaches sought to provide a new express service from Bassingbourn to London. The fare would be 10s.6d. The Transport Officer at the camp said that personnel varied between 1,000 and 1,200 and the maximum number on weekend leave between 150 and 200

1948 06 08

Concern at the possibility of parts of Cambridgeshire countryside being taken over by the R.A.F. for practice bombing ranges was voiced at a meeting in Trinity College. They propose to set up practice bombing ranges at Babraham (near Duxford aerodrome), East Hatley (near Bassingbourn and Bourn) and North of Whittlesey. These ranges, it said, are used from time to time for dropping marker bombs only and when the red flag is flying and the footpaths across are blocked. At Babraham the range is crossed by two footpaths but the footbridge across the river is broken down.

1948 10 15

Premier Travel told the Traffic Commissioners that in August 1947 they had acquired the business of a firm at Barley who, pre-war, were authorised to operate excursions from a number of points. Now they were seeking that the people of Bassingbourn, Guilden Morden area should have the benefit of coastal and recreational facilities for the theatre at Peterborough and for Newmarket races. The adjutant at Bassingbourn R.A.F. station said they were a Commonwealth station and a good many of the people there were from the Dominions. The matter of sightseeing was of great importance to them.

1948 12 28

Bassingbourn RAF station, p11

1949 02 18

South Cambs. R.D.C. have given an assurance it is their policy to take water into every council house in their district. Lists of tenants who suffered extreme hardship by reason of having to obtain water from standpipes were submitted from Bassingbourn, Guilden Morden and Melbourn. In 1938 they had sent out a circular letter to every house asking if they would pay 2d a week for water, but nearly every village voted against it

1949 10 28

The county council are to be recommended to take steps to obtain an order subjecting High Street Swavesey to a 30 mph speed limit. It will also be imposed in built up areas at Burwell, Isleham, Shepreth, Bassingbourn and Lt Abington. But they refused Kingston parish council's application for a speed limit there

1950

1950 02 17

The body of a man was found lying in the disused machine gun post on the Old North Road near Bassingbourn RAF station. P.S. J. Adams said he found the body together with the usual wayfarer's kit, which contained a few slices of bread and an identity card. There were no marks of violence but deceased was scantily clothed. There was evidence of malnutrition. Death was due to pneumonia

1950 05 19

Bassingbourn cross at cemetery, p13

1950 12 13

The Minister of Education has approved the provision of a new secondary modern school at Bassingbourn for 340 pupils at an estimated cost of £86,940. Negotiation will now begin for the purchase of the 22-acre site.

1951 02 05

Three survived out of a crew of eight when a US Superfortress crashed and burst into flames at Manor Farm, Abington Piggotts shortly after taking off from Bassingbourn RAF station. The survivors were in the tail unit which broke away and somersaulted over the main wreckage into a neighbouring field. The crew inside stepped out almost unhurt. Firemen entered the blazing fuselage in their search for the rest of the crew. Exploding ammunition added to the danger of the work # c.26.1

1951 12 12

Is an electric washing machine an essential in the educational development of children? The County Primary Education committee sought approval that machines should be hired from the Eastern Electricity Board at three guineas a time for the use of schools at Bassingbourn, Comberton and Swavesey. Councillors were equally divided. How many people were in an income bracket to afford a washing machine? Not many. The only way you can buy them after you have learned to use them is by the hire purchase system that people can ill-afford. It was approved on the casting vote of the chairman.

1952 07 31

Bassingbourn houses, p7

1952 08 21

The first National Servicemen to be trained as Canberra jet crews are receiving their final training at 231 Operational Conversion Unit R.A.F. station, Bassingbourn. In one room twenty young men in flying helmets were busily working with slide rules and graph paper in small box-like cubicles containing an exact replica of what they would have in the plane, including the latest radar equipment. Another block was fitted out for "ejector seat" drill and it should take only 10 seconds to get from the nose of the aircraft back to one's seat prior to being ejected. Since the National Service aircrew scheme started in 1949 some 4,000 men have been accepted for flying duties

1952 12 18

Following an inspection by South Cambs R.D.C. of some "no fines" concrete houses they recommend the erection of 100 such houses in Sawston, and 50 in Duxford, Linton and Bassingbourn. The houses were comfortable to live in and of a smaller area than the type of house they had been building. They will not have to find any labour for erection as the firm will supply the men who will probably be billeted in the Trumpington National Service Hostel

1953 04 08

After an all-night search a Meteor jet fighter from R.A.F. station, Bassingbourn, was found near Field Barn, Orwell. The pilot's body was found in the wreckage. At midnight last night the BBC broadcast an appeal for the plane when it was reported missing on a routine flight. Police were asked to look out for the aircraft which was eventually found by an R.A.F. search plane. Mrs D.L. Hallett of Orwell said she was watching her television set when the house was shaken, but she did not hear what had happened until morning. Elsewhere in Orwell nothing was heard.

1953 10 16

While Bassingbourn Village College was being built last winter, 2,250 bricks used in the foundations disintegrated, accompanied by another 2,000 stand in stacks. They were common wire-cut bricks from a firm in the Midlands and seemed not to have been properly baked. They looked fit to be used and had been submitted to the County Architect. The brick-makers said they would not have supplied such bricks for foundations, but the architect had specified them. The site was open and bricks were affected by frost. Other bricks had been supplied by the National Coal Board.

1953 10 29

An old-established ironmongery and harness business at Melbourn, J.E. Hagger and Son, has finished trading because of the increase in the use of motors and tractors and the consequent decline in the demand for harness work. It had been founded at the end of the 19th century. Before the war two harness makers and two apprentices were employed but now there was scarcely sufficient work for one man. At the small Bassingbourn branch, opened in 1911, one man worked on making and repairing harness.

1954 04 23 c

County Councillors say that as the Girton-Earith Road across Oakington airfield is now permanently closed, and the need for a by-pass has gone then the land at Girton purchased for a by-pass should be sold. Owing to the expansion of Bassingbourn aerodrome and building developments between Bassingbourn and Kneesworth, the route for a future by-pass has now been transferred to the eastern side of Kneesworth

1954 05 28

Bassingbourn rogation procession, p6

1954 06 25

RAF authorities are investigating reports that two parachutes were seen to appear from a Canberra jet bomber shortly before it crashed in a sugar beet field near Six Mile Bottom. It had taken off from Bassingbourn a few minutes before. The three crew, who include a Royston man, have been reported as missing believed killed but only one body has yet been found. Mystery surrounds the crash but the finding of the aircraft's cockpit canopy in the Melbourn area indicates it might have become detached and been the cause of the accident. The plane hurtled into the ground in a field half-a-mile from the railway and made a hole about 40 feet deep, the sides of which collapsed almost burying the aircraft.

1954 09 23

Bassingbourn Village College has just been completed and for generations to come young and old will have every opportunity to meet for study, self-expression, practical work or simple relaxation in a building which is delightful in itself and in its surroundings. Its Hall is designed for high-quality acoustics and will be the cinema, theatre, dance and concert hall of the village. There is a splendid gymnasium, a workshop, and a domestic science laboratory complete with a model flat. Courses include farm machinery, advanced pig keeping and gardening on chalk. Miss Julia Lang, of 'Listen with Mother' on the radio, will speak on 'Telling Stories to Children'. The school is already in operation and some 315 children from 14 villages have settled in.

1954 10 30

The ultra-modern Bassingbourn Village College which will be the focal point of cultural and social life for 11 Cambridgeshire villages was officially opened by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr R.A. Butler. It is the first village college to be opened since the war; seven more are planned and sites already acquired at Swavesey and Soham. It would help to stop the drift away from agricultural to industrial areas which might seriously upset the economic balance of the country. A crowd of villagers gathered to watch the arrivals and a detachment of police were on duty to deal with about 250 cars which choked the entrance to the school and overflowed on to the approach road.

1954 12 23

Saying farewell to Mr Henry Morris who is retiring from the post of Chief Education Officer after 34 years the County Council presented him with a portable typewriter and a filing cabinet. He had seen that modern transport which would otherwise transform the countryside into a widespread suburb and the rural hinterland into a cultural void, could be harnessed to create a rural region for the provision of educational and social amenities. He created the Village College as a rural community centre providing facilities for the countryman as good as those offered in towns. He had reinvigorated the school curriculum, improved the quality of teaching and established school gardens at Bottisham and Bassingbourn.

1955 07 21

The County Library has issued far more books this year. The new branch library at Bassingbourn is well used and library centres were provided for the first time at Papworth Everard. The Matron of the Settlement provided accommodation in the Welfare Hut and the stock of the existing library was handed to the county authorities for amalgamation with the new books. A small library was also provided at the school. 55 07 21

1956 04 18

Three new almshouses built under a bequest from Miss C.L. Elbourn were dedicated at Bassingbourn. They are of bungalow type, well-built and pleasant, with a sitting-dining room with an all-purpose stove, a bedroom, kitchen and bathroom. The first occupants are Mr & Mrs A.W. Billett, aged 75, Miss Elizabeth Chamberlain (88) and Arthur Loates (83). 56 04 18

1957 05 30

That feature of modern shopping, the self-service store, has been adopted by the N.A.A.F.I. at RAF Bassingbourn. Service wives were present at the opening ceremony of the shop, which caters for 230 families. A fully automatic cash register has been installed, doing away with hand-written invoices, and a covered perambulator park added just outside the door. 57 05 30 & a

1957 08 03

The Eastern Electricity Board has installed V.H.F. Radio control in its mobile vehicles which range from heavy field vehicles to vans used by electricians engaged in house repairs. One lady from Bassingbourn telephoned to report a fault but before she put the receiver down the electrician was knocking on the door! The main transmitters run night and day allowing communication between vehicles and there is a portable transmitter that can be taken home by the controlling engineer in case of an emergency during the night. 57 08 03a

1957 08 28

All over the country the Women's Institutes are busily recording the history of their villages, questioning old residents and collecting old deeds, photographs and paintings. Documents found in a fireplace recess in a Comberton cottage include an invitation to a 'farriers feast' at Bassingbourn and a horse doctor's bill. They were lent to a Cambridge personality with the intention that they reach the Folk Museum, but were somehow mislaid. 57 08 28

1958 08 30

Bassingbourn RAF Station is destined to become the world's first jet bomber conversion unit. All RAF crews throughout the world operating bomber, long-range photographic reconnaissance and jet transport aircraft have undergone training there. Two years ago it formed a Canberra formation team, carrying out a complete routine of aerobatic flying and considered one of the finest ever produced. 58 08 30d

1958 10 01

Ten years ago Eastern Electricity's Fens sub-area had been faced with a back-log of work. Some 171 villages and about 4,000 farms had been without a mains supply – but now all had been connected. They had enlarged sub-stations at Bassingbourn, Histon, Chatteris and March and erected new overhead power lines. There was an increasing interest in floor warming equipment which was very much a 'coming thing' and improvements had been made in meter reading. 58 10 01

1959 07 09

Three members of the crew of a Canberra were killed when the aircraft crashed a few hundred yards from the runway at Bassingbourn R.A.F. station. It came down in a barley field near the main Royston-Huntingdon Road at about the same spot where another Canberra crashed a year ago. Thousands of gallons of foam gas and 120lbs of carbon dioxide were used by firemen in extinguishing the fire. 59 07 09

1959 10 15

The Playle family have owned a slaughterhouse at Bassingbourn since 1900 but in order to comply with new regulations certain alterations had to be made, an Inquiry was told. The County Education Officer objected, saying it had a detrimental effect on the school and had reduced physical education outside because of the smell. But the slaughterhouse had been there before the school was built. A petition signed by 100 villagers objected to it but another containing 650 names was in support. 59 10 15 & a

1960s The Cambridgeshire Collection has newspaper cuttings files from this date

1960

1960 05 24

Throughout the year the CIP carried a series of feature articles relating to Cambridgeshire villages. They included Bassingbourn – 60 06 24 & a CIP

1960 11 11

Bassingbourn Village College have inaugurated agricultural classes for young men between the ages of 15 and 18 years. The two-year course provides education for farm workers one day a week and covers stockmanship, crop husbandry farm implements and tractors using equipment provided by local farmers. Mr C.F. Standen, a smallholder, says 'You have got to encourage boys to go on the land nowadays. Farming is becoming easier but you have still got to have the men. The best implement is the sunshine: it makes everything so much easier to work' 60 11 11

1963 02 15

Kneesworth is a little hamlet, population about 200, on the Old North Road. Nobody comes to their parish meetings and it is difficult for the council to make up a quorum. The centre of Bassingbourn is a mile to the west but the two parishes are virtually indistinguishable. Now they have asked whether they can join up with their larger neighbour (pop 2,600) as one council. 63 02 15

1963 04 24

Royston Priory Memorial Gardens to have fountain to commemorate American airmen of 91st Bomb Group who died on missions from Bassingbourn. 63 04 24a

1963 09 04

A Canberra aircraft coming in to land at RAF Bassingbourn was forced to overshoot because of two motor lorries moving along the Old North Road across its path. 63 09 04a

1963 11 26

Bassingbourn's new County Primary School, looking like a miniature village college, was officially opened. It was built to replace the school in High Street built in 1877 which had been inadequate especially when families had come to live at the RAF station. At one time there had been 360 children on the roll. Cambridgeshire had provided 13 new primary schools in rural areas as well as enlarging 29 others, laying the foundation for education, Ald F.H. Jeeps said. 63 11 26a

1965 02 18

Bassingbourn Village College Youth Club feature – 65 02 18b

1965 04 30

Bassingbourn Rational motor company history feature – 65 04 30c

1965 10 02

Bassingbourn Hoops pub features RAF memorabilia – 65 10 02a

1967 11 17

Bassingbourn RAF bomber base to close in mid 1969, 140 civilians will lose jobs – 67 11 17a

1967 11 21

Railway bridge on Cambridge to Bedford Line between Toft and Bassingbourn in poor condition – 67 11 21

1969 01 22

RAF Bassingbourn to close – feature- 69 01 22

1970

1970 01 03

Bassingbourn parish library in parish church for 250 years sold to Universities of Cambridge and Essex. Was started in 1717 by resident and comprises 800 volumes – 70 01 03

1970 04 24

Bassingbourn school discover glass slides – 70 04 24

1972 09 08

Just in case The Bomb should ever drop, eight powerful new air raid warning sirens are to be installed in Cambridgeshire. Although few people ever see or hear them, the Home Office has about 22,000 warning points in the United Kingdom equipped with electric or hand sirens for air attack warnings and maroons for fall-out warnings. Now they are to be replaced by powerful compressed-air sirens which are much more efficient and much louder. The eight which are to be installed in Cambridgeshire will be at Brooklands Avenue, Cambridge, Waterbeach Barracks, Oakington airfield, Great Wilbraham, the old Duxford airfield, Bassingbourn Barracks Lt Eversden & Linton 72 09 08

1972 09 15

The lychgate made by prisoners of war in Changi Prison, Singapore, in 1942 has been brought to England and reassembled at Bassingbourn Barracks, near Royston. A small plaque on a side post tells how the gate was made by men of the 18th division of the British Army, which included men from the Cambridgeshire Regiment, and erected at the entrance to the prison cemetery where about 600 prisoners of war were buried. When the cemetery was cleared after the war and the dead reinterred elsewhere, the lychgate was removed and later put up outside St George's Garrison Church at Tanglin.

1972 12 18

Bassingbourn lychgate, p11

1973 06 25

Bassingbourn plan, p14

1973 10 17

News that Royston could finally have a new sewage works in three years was greeted by town councillors with relief tempered with scepticism. It is 21 years since a new works was called for in 1952. In recent years the council have lived through a saga of complaints from farmers about crop damage due to sewage flooding, petitions from tenants about smells from the old works at Coombes Hole, and increasing difficulties in dealing with the quantity of sewage from the town which culminated with a brake on further housing development when the works could no longer cope. But Bassingbourn village have complained about losing land for the scheme

1973 11 23

Bassingbourn Village College, p17

1974 06 21

Bassingbourn vets return, p19

1974 09 10

Anglian Water Authority have asked Souths Cambs district council to refuse permission for any new development and severely restrict building in a further 19 because of the overloading of the sewage treatment works, Milton, whose drains lead into the Cambridge works has suffered from a development embargo for the last four years. It is now joined by Shelford, Girton, Histon and Fen Ditton where a complete ban on development is requested. At Over, Gamlingay and Bassingbourn permission will only be given to one-building application. All of these sewage works have been badly overloaded for some time but the cuts in public spending have prevented AWA from going ahead with extension schemes

1975 03 21

Cambridge has become a garrison town, with more soldiers living within a 10-mile radius of the city than University dons. With the arrival of a new infantry regiment at Oakington there are now 2,500 soldiers in the area with 2,000 dependants. Most of the troops are stationed at Bassingbourn with the army engineers at the former battle of Britain RAF station at Waterbeach. There is no larger concentration of troops than this in East Anglia, other than at Colchester.

1976 01 03

A huge clearing up operation was organised by emergency services as the hurricane winds died down. The trail of wreckage included tiles ripped off hundreds of homes, fences blown down, flattened greenhouses and television masts torn off chimneys. At Milton an ancient elm tree which only months ago was declared safe by tree experts was partly blown down. At Histon the side of a house was blown out on a new estate and some villages between Harston and Bassingbourn were still blacked out today after the hurricane blew down power cables.

1977 05 27

Births, marriages and deaths have become a way of life for Mr Peter Layng. For he has spent the last 11 years copying out parish registers. The first register he copied was of Stapleford when he was researching his wife's side of the family and his hobby took off from there. Now he spends almost every morning at the County Record Office and is working on his 45th register. He has copied out big registers such as Bassingbourn as well as small ones like Tadlow. His lists are typed up in quadruplicate by Mr Colin Hatton and his wife Angela.

1977 12 09

Throughout the war Mrs May Webb was one of 40 ladies at Bassingbourn who worked to provide snacks and hot drinks for American bomber crews from the nearby airfield. But the old Church Room which housed the de-luxe soup kitchen is now lying damp, dilapidated and forgotten. Now she is determined to see the building restored in time for a commemorative service planned next year and feels it would provide a useful community meeting place.

1978 04 25

A plan to sell off part of the playing fields at Bassingbourn Village College is being considered by Cambridgeshire County Council as part of its programme to raise cash. Development land has been fetching up to £40,000 an acre and all their land is being looked at to find any that can be sold with planning permission. But the scheme is likely to run into heavy opposition from villagers. The site is also used by the primary school and by young footballers who cannot use the recreation ground because of a restrictive covenant banning Sunday games. A similar scheme to sell land at Bottisham Village College is also being opposed

1978 05 24

The dedication of a memorial to American GIs based at Bassingbourn during the war gave a Cambridge woman an excuse to wear her black hat, which is 37 years old. "I wear it with pride as it is a wartime relic", she said. Doris Foster, who used to be the landlady of the Angel public house at Royston, failed to recognise one of her wartime regulars Sam Cipolla from Chicago. But he remembered her: "I used to sneak under your fence to get a pint & used to give sweets to the children who called me Uncle Sam", he said. He may have recognised the hat which she often wore while serving in the bar because the Americans liked it.

1978 05 30

Bassingbourn air show, p3

1980

1981 05 06

The Duchess of Kent formally opened Denis Wilson Court, a Royal British Legion housing development providing 28 bed-sitters and 24 double unites for ex-servicemen and women. It was named after the county president of the British Legion. Members of the band of the Queen's Division from Bassingbourn accompanied hymns in the dedication service. 81 05 06

1985 06 28

Worried villages have called a public meeting over plans to open a psychiatric hospital at Kneesworth House, Bassingbourn. They fear it may result in dangerous or disturbed patients walking the streets. A last-minute deal by an American medical firm has changed overnight a nursing home into a mental hospital but they say that although there may be disturbed or suicidal patients, they will not be violent. There would be no locked wards or padded cells and villagers could visit to use the sports facilities.

1985 10 03

“Full Metal Jacket”, a Stanley Kubrick film about the Vietnam war is being made at Bassingbourn Barracks. A massive set portrays an American base camp in the heart of the jungle. Metal huts have been built and 39 palm trees imported from Spain. Workers come in regularly to water the 40-foot palms, although overnight high winds claimed on of them. Plenty of noise is expected once the camp comes under attack but few will notice as the base already has a shooting range with artillery exercises going on regularly 85 10 03a

1986 05 09

Pear Tree pub Bassingbourn jokes etched on windows – 86 05 09

1986 05 09

Brinkley post office has been voted the Best Village Shop of the Year in Cambridgeshire. Almost every inch of Jackie Fane’s counter, shelf and wall space is taken up with produce ranging from crab thermiodore and trout to seeds, sunglasses and scissors. The Community Council has also judged Les and Janet Reinemann of Haslingfield as Best Village Shopkeepers with Mr B. Patel of the Mace Stores Bassingbourn and Mr A. Garner of The Stores, Great Gidding, close behind. 86 05 09a

1988 04 07

Bassingbourn airfield history – 88 04 07 & a

1988 11 10

Kneesworth House psychiatric hospital was dubbed ‘another Broadmoor’ and condemned as a risk to local people before it even opened. When the first group of mentally ill patients moved into the hall in Bassingbourn village after a bitter protest three years ago, it was to a reception of open hostility. But now after an expansion programme, the community is coming round. Many of the 110 staff come from the surrounding area and now a visitors group is to be set up to socialise with the patients 88 11 10b

1989 04 29

Litlington has been rocked by shock news that its abattoir will close with the loss of 70 jobs. It is the biggest slaughterhouse in the area and many workers live locally, some have not had any other job since leaving school. Owner Cliff Playle, whose grandfather had a butcher’s shop in Bassingbourn, blames fierce competition from imported European meat and now they face big costs to bring it up to EEC standards. The company is also a wholesaler and prepares meat for big High Street names such as Tesco and Sainsbury 89 04 29

1989 05 05

Kneesworth House psychiatric hospital at Bassingbourn plans to build an extension to increase the number of patients from 89 to 148. Staff numbers will rise from 115 to 178. AMI Health Care says the existing premises, the first private facility of its kind in Britain, could not cope with demand. Bassingbourn residents bitterly opposed plans for the hospital to open in their village nearly four years ago but many have accepted it, with some taking an active supporting role. It provides a nationwide service for severe psychiatric patients 89 05 05b

1989 12 07

Bassingbourn Village College was built the wrong way round in 1954. The original main entrance was blocked up for more office space and a valuable statue is now out of view because it is still at the original entrance. The changing rooms are the furthest walk possible to the playing fields than any

other pointing the school, Governor Allan Miller says. But there is the possibility that the college is in the right place, and the village needs moving. 89 12 07a